

partners, our victory must and will be absolute victory.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I was to speak next, but I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Vermont be given 3 minutes and then I have the opportunity to address the Senate after that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

Mr. JEFFORDS. Madam President, as chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which is the lead authorizing committee for many of the programs authorized in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, I would like to comment on the pending FY 2002 transportation appropriations conference report.

Overall, this is an excellent bill and I intend to vote for it. However, there are a few provisions in the highway portion of this legislation that concern me. TEA-21 represented a carefully negotiated compromise between many different points of view, numerous committees, and the entire House and Senate. One key provision of this compromise legislation was Revenue Aligned Budget Authority—RABA—which ensured that obligations from the Highway Trust Fund would equal revenues into the fund, called TEA-21. TEA-21 determined a carefully negotiated breakdown between the share of RABA funds that would flow to the States through the apportionment formulas and the share that would be competitively distributed through the allocated programs.

Unfortunately, the conference report makes significant changes to the authorization for RABA funding. As it has done in each of the past 2 years, the conference report ignores the authorized distribution of funds for allocated programs under RABA. However, this time, rather than giving the money back to the States through the formulas, this legislation earmarks it for special projects. In addition, the conference report earmarks nearly \$500 million that was supposed to be distributed to States through the apportionment formulas. As a result, some States will lose significant amounts of highway funding. In essence, I am very concerned that the appropriators are rewriting the apportionment formulas that were so carefully negotiated in TEA-21.

I do not mean to begrudge the appropriators their prerogative to earmark funding for specific projects. In fact, I

am very pleased that some of the funding is set aside for Vermont. However, at some point we do have to draw the line on earmarking when it threatens the very fabric of a carefully negotiated authorization. Unfortunately, this year we may have finally crossed that line.

I look forward to working with the appropriators next year and throughout the reauthorization process to make sure we do a better job of maintaining the integrity of TEA-21 while providing the appropriators flexibility within the guidelines set forth in that law. TEA-21 is a delicately balanced piece of legislation and we must be careful not to upset that balance.

I yield back any time I have.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

PARTISAN ATTACKS ON THE MAJORITY LEADER

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to express great concern about recent events and comments that have been made in this Chamber and in the House of Representatives that I believe are not in keeping with the sense of cooperation and bipartisanship that we have seen since September 11.

I remember, after the horrible attacks that we all grieved about and have focused on, on that day of September 11 we joined together on the Capitol steps, and one of our colleagues spontaneously started singing "God Bless America," and we all joined in. And there was a sense of purpose and dedication and commitment as Americans. We all said that while we may have had differences—that is what it is all about in a democracy—we were going to put aside the partisan bickering and the personal assaults and do as our President asked, which was to come together and focus on the needs of the country and to set a new tone.

And then a few weeks later we saw our own majority leader and his staff under another kind of attack, that of anthrax. It came to be an attack on those of us in the Hart Building. And we have now seen other letters. But we have seen our majority leader and his staff operating with incredible dedication, with poise, with tremendous leadership. And the hard work of the staff is continuing.

In fact, all of our staffs are continuing under very difficult circumstances. My own staff operates out of a room in the loading dock at Russell. We see people who are in various situations around this complex of the Capitol, but they continue to serve.

We have done a lot of things. We immediately responded to the attacks with a commitment of resources for New York and for the Pentagon. Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit

the Pentagon and see the incredible changes that have taken place since September 11. They are rebuilding the Pentagon with speed that is amazing. Everyone involved in that should be commended for the work they are doing to rebuild this important part of our country and our national security and leadership.

We have responded to that. We have passed airport security bills. Yes, there were differences, but they were worked out to move us forward in terms of airport and airline security.

We have passed economic legislation to support the airlines and passed a sweeping antiterrorism bill that has included the ability to track the money through money laundering provisions—I was pleased to be a part of it in the Banking Committee—as well as upgrading the tools available to law enforcement officials and create the kinds of opportunities to reach out and prevent terrorism as well as to respond to it.

We have continued to move the appropriations bills through this process. We are coming to the conclusion of that in the next couple of weeks. But we are still debating economic recovery, how best to do that. What should be our priorities? Should we, in fact, invest in additional homeland security, beefing up our public health infrastructure, as I hope we will do?

But we are now seeing a constant drone of attacks and comments being made about our Senate majority leader, and I just have to rise today to express deep disappointment and concern about that. We have seen personal comments being made.

Last week the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee made statements about our leader saying there was nothing inside the leader's head on which to focus. There have been implications, with all kinds of derogatory statements that have been made about his leadership and calls for him to step aside because he may be putting forward a different vision or set of values and priorities than someone on the other side—statement after statement, attacks about someone's sincerity and their patriotism and their leadership that are just not helpful and not necessary and, by the way, absolutely absurd.

I found it offensive, when we were listening to the debate on the energy bill on Friday; over and over again it was laced with personal comments, comments that are unbecoming to this body or the body on the other side of the building from which I came as a House Member.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Ms. STABENOW. I am happy to yield to my good friend from California.

Mrs. BOXER. First, I want to say how proud I am you took to the floor to bring this to light. I think the